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BATMAN

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BATMAN



MOENCH
MANLEY
RUBINSTEIN

DIRECT SALES

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Kaare
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Mortal Remains

ABATTOIR, KILLER OF BLOOD KIN, STILL STALKS THE DARK.

HIS COUSIN, GRAHAM ETCHISON, REMAINS MISSING.

AND JEAN PAUL VALLEY, THE NEW BATMAN, REFUSES TO REST.

SOMEWHERE IN THE ENDLESS NIGHT, GUNHAWK AND ABATTOIR MOCK HIM, BOTH UNFINISHED BUSINESS...

GUNHAWK CAN WAIT.

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MIKE MANLEY
penciller

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BATMAN created by
BOB KANE

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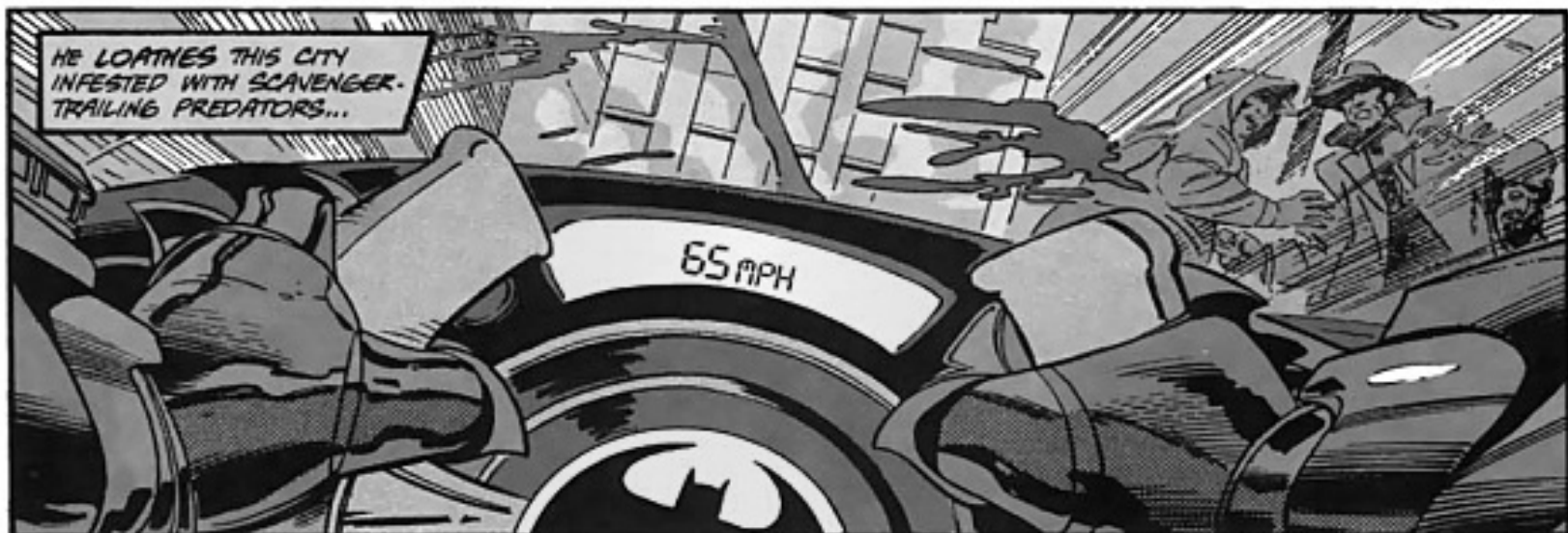
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HE ROARS THROUGH STREETS
SPLASHED RED NIGHTLY,
THROUGH NEIGHBORHOODS
CHOKING ON VIOLENCE AND
DEATH BLOCK BY BLOODY
BLOCK.



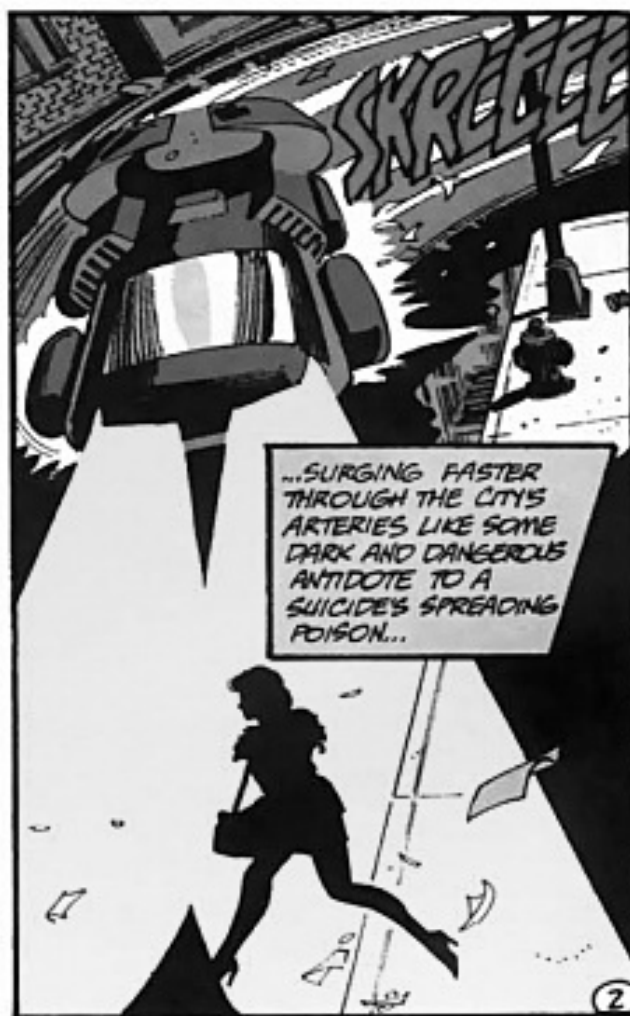
HE LOATHES THIS CITY
INFESTED WITH SCAVENGER.
TRAILING PREDATORS...



...BUT FOR A CRIMEFIGHTER
OBSESSED WITH PROVING HIM-
SELF, THE BRIGHT HELL OF GOTHAM
HAS BECOME A DARK PARADISE OF
OPPORTUNITY.



HIS MIND FLASHES ON
ABATTOIR'S SICK,
TWISTED FACE FRAMED
BY LANK, GREASY HAIR-
AND HE JACKS THE CAR
INTO HIGHER GEAR...



...SURGING FASTER
THROUGH THE CITY'S
ARTERIES LIKE SOME
DARK AND DANGEROUS
ANTIDOTE TO A
SUICIDE'S SPREADING
POISON...

...FULLY CONVINCED HE
IS THE ONLY CURE...



...AND COMPLETELY
OBLIVIOUS TO ANY
AND ALL POTENTIAL
SIDE-EFFECTS.

WOULDA
KILLED
ME...

...IN A
GOTHAM
SECOND.



TWO MORE
MINUTES, COUSIN
GRAHAM, AND THE
PAIN YOU FEEL NOW...
WILL BE A MEMORY
OF LOST
BLISS...

...WHEN
THE INEXORABLE
WEIGHT OF
DEATH ABRUPTLY
GROWS
HEAVIER.

Y-YOU...
YOU'RE...
M-MAD...



NOT AT
ALL, COUSIN
GRAHAM...

I'M SIMPLY
HUNGRY FOR THE
NOURISHMENT OF YOUR
SOUL... AND YOUR DYING
FLESH FEEDS MY
LIFEFORCE.



ONE MORE MINUTE
NOW, COUSIN GRAHAM...
ONE MORE MINUTE
OF SAVORED
ANTICIPATION...

...BEFORE THE
NEXT WEIGHT
FALLS.

NO- YOU
CAN'T KEEP...
DOING
THIS...!

ARE
YOU GOING TO
STOP ME--WHEN EVEN
THE HIGH AND
MIGHTY BATMAN
COULDN'T?

ONE
SWIFT STAB
IN THE BACK WOULD
HAVE KILLED YOU
LONG AGO--

--BUT A HUNDRED SLOW
PUNCTURES WILL BE SO MUCH
MORE INTERESTING... AS
BECOMS A TRUE ABATOIR.

PLEASE...
PLEASE...

THROAT'S
GETTING THICK,
ISN'T IT?

YOU'LL
PROBABLY CHOKE ON
YOUR DYING WHIMPER
WHEN IT COMES...BUT
RIGHT NOW--

RATCH
AAARRRR
KRAANK

--FEEL
FREE TO
SIMPLY
SCREAM.

IN THE CHANGED CAVE, A BOY WORKS THE HUGE CRAY COMPUTERS... FILLED WITH MORE WORRY THAN WONDER.

NOT EASY BEING THE BATMAN'S SIDEKICK WHEN HE WANTS TO STRANGLE ME ON SIGHT...

...EVEN IF THE URGE WAS PLANTED BY THE SYSTEM'S BRAINWASHING.



HAVING A PARTNER, IN HIS MIND, IS THE SAME AS NEEDING HELP...

...WHICH PRETTY MUCH WRITES ZILCH FOR THE BATMAN-ROBIN TEAM.



STILL DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE ORDER OF SAINT DUMAS OR THE SYSTEM-- BUT TEN TO ONE IT'S PROGRAMMED HIM TO SUCCEED AT ALL COSTS AS THE AVENGING ANGEL AZRAEL...

...AND NOW THAT HE'S THE NEW BATMAN, THE PROGRAMMING HAS BECOME AN OBSESSION.



HE'S DRIVEN TO SUCCEED--HELLBENT ON TOPPING THE FIRST BATMAN--EVEN AT THE COST OF RUTHLESSNESS.

BUT IF JEAN PAUL IS MORE THAN CAPABLE OF DOING THE THINGS BATMAN MUST DO--WHICH HE IS-- I'M NOT AT ALL SURE HE'S QUALIFIED TO DECIDE WHAT THOSE THINGS SHOULD BE.



BEING GOOD
ENOUGH ISN'T
ENOUGH IF YOU'RE
NOT GOOD.

LIKE THEY SAY IN HISTORY
CLASS: MUSSOLINI MADE THE
TRAINS RUN ON TIME - BUT
HIS MAIN MAN HITLER WAS
USING TRAINS TO FREIGHT
PEOPLE LIKE CATTLE TO THE
SLAUGHTER.



NOT THAT JEAN PAUL IS
ANYTHING LIKE THOSE TWO,
BUT AS LONG AS ABATTOIR
REMAINS THE ONLY LEAD IN
GRAHAM ETCHISON'S ABDUCTION,
THE BATMAN'S GONNA GET MY
HELP, WHETHER HE WANTS
IT OR--



FINALLY
HACKED INTO THE
MUNICIPAL TAX RECORDS
SYSTEM--WITH A FULL LIST
OF THE REAL ESTATE
OWNED BY HENRY
ETCHISON...

IF HIS NEPHEW
ABATTOIR IS HIDING
OUT SOMEWHERE,
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE
IT'S IN ONE OF THESE
PROPERTIES...



...AND PROBABLY
THE ONE WITH THE
LEAST CHANCE OF
DISCOVERY.



HE CHECKS THE LAWYERS
LIST ONE LAST TIME.

Salvage
1312 Tennessee
Abandon Warehouse
129 Blackman
Bayside Apts.
437 River Dr.

IF ABATTOIR HAS
TAKEN REFUGE IN
ONE OF HIS UNCLE'S
BUILDINGS, IT WILL
BE THE ONE WITH-
OUT SECURITY...

IT WILL
BE HERE.

SCREEEEETCH

FAREWELL
FOR NOW, COUSIN
GRAHAM...SINCE
I DO BELIEVE
IT'S TIME FOR
ME TO VISIT YOUR
MOTHER.

THINK
FONDLY OF HER--
BUT DON'T LET
THE WEIGHT OF
IT ALL GET YOU
DOWN.

THE SHADOW HE CASTS
HAS GROWN LARGER
AND BECOME
DARKER...

...BUT STILL HE FEELS ECLIPSED
BY THE ORIGINAL.

HE HAS CHANGED THE CAVE
AND THE COSTUME, ADDED
WEAPONS, GOTTEN RID OF
THE KID...

...BUT THE LARGE
LEGACY OF THE
FIRST BATMAN
REMAINS--TO HAUNT,
MOCK, AND REMIND...



HE RECALLS HIS
FIRST, DISASTROUS,
ENCOUNTER WITH
ABATTOIR.

THE STRUGGLE
ATOP THE
SWERVING BUS...



WATCHING
ABATTOIR JUMP
TO FREEDOM...

SECURING THE BUS
RATHER THAN
PURSUING ABATTOIR...



SAVING
THE KIDS...

...LOSING THE
KILLER.



HE HAS NO DOUBT
THAT BRUCE WAYNE
WOULD ALSO HAVE
CHOSEN TO SAVE
THE KIDS...



...BUT HE SUSPECTS
THAT A HELPLESS
ABATTOIR WOULD
HAVE BEEN FORCED
TO WATCH.



HIS DECISION
WAS CORRECT.

EXECUTION
WAS LACKING.



AND NOW--

SHHHHHH



AT LAST.

YOU..!

VINDICATION.



AND VENGEANCE.

CH CH CH CH CH CHING



STOK TOK TOK TOK TUKT

UNFFF!

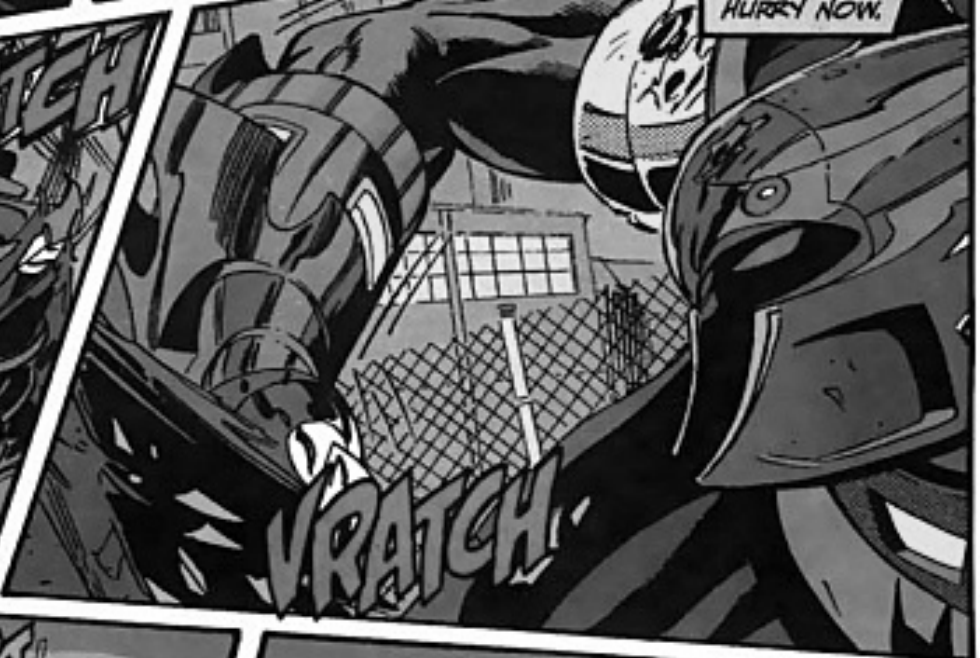


NO...
N-N-NO...!



PRUTCH

SHRIMP



VRATCH



THIS TIME
THERE IS NO
BUS, NO
BLIZZARD,
NO KIDS.

PRAKT

THIS TIME, HE
HAS ABATTOIR
DEAD TO
RIGHTS--



--AND ALL
HIS.

KRAK



BLOOD--

--JUST
A LITTLE
BLOOD...

...AND
HE'LL NEVER
STOP ME.



I WAS
RIGHT-- BUT
JEAN PAUL
FIGURED
IT OUT
FIRST...

LOOKS
LIKE HE'S
ALREADY
MADE
CONTACT...

BUT WHY
IS HE BEING
SO CALM ABOUT
HERDING ABATTOIR
TOWARD THAT
FOUNDRY?



"DIDN'T HE
KNOW THERE'S
A NIGHT
SHIFT?"

AHH--!

MORE
BLOOD--
TO FEED MY
SOUL AND
MAKE ME
STRONG!



HE SEES THE NIGHT
GUARD STUMBLE
OFF IN PAIN--
NOTICES SMOKE
RISING FROM THE
STACKS...

THE FOUNDRY IS
OPERATING--AND NOW
THERE IS A RUSH.















OUT
OF THE
WAY!

LET ME
THROUGH!

H-HELP
ME...

C-CAN'T
HOLD ON...
MUCH
L-LONGER...

WITH FIERCE FIRE
COURSING THROUGH
HIS BLOOD, HE
STANDS AT A
MOMENT OF
DEFINING
CHOICE.

SHOULD HE
FIRE KILLING
BLADES OR
SAVING LINE?

HIS ARM WAVERS...
AND THEN HIS MIND
REELS, SPUN OFF
INTO CONFLICT AND
CONFUSION...

P-PLEASE...
I...I'M
GOING TO...
F-FALL...

YOU...!
BOTH
OF YOU!

AND HAUNTED
BY GHOSTS.

F-FATHER...
AND
SAINT
DUMAS
HIMSELF...!

YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR
PATH'S END, MY SON! WITH
ONE FINAL ACT, YOUR LONG
CRUSADE WILL BE OVER!
SLAY THE ENEMY!

NO! SLAY
THE SIN, NOT
THE SINNER!

YOU CRUSADE FOR LIGHT,
CLAD IN A DARKNESS
WHICH IS BUT A
MASK!

CHOOSE
SALVATION, NOT
DAMNATION.

LET HIM LIVE AND HE
WILL ONLY KILL AGAIN,
THE BLOOD HE SPILLS
FOREVER STAINING YOUR
HANDS! DO YOUR WORK,
ASSASSIN!

ENFOLD HIM,
AVENGING ANGEL
OF DEATH, IN
YOUR DARK
WINGS!

SHOOT
YOUR BLADES--
KILL HIM!

CAST
YOUR LINE--
SAVE HIM!

W HELP ME...
PLEASE...

NO! STOP
CONFUSING
ME!

I...I CHOOSE...
NEITHER
ONE...

...AND
YOU CAN...FIGHT
IT OUT BETWEEN
YOURSELVES...!



TWO HOURS
LATER, JUST
PAST DAWN:

HIS HEAD THREATENS
TO EXPLODE FROM
A PAIN HE HAS KNOWN
IN THE PAST BUT
NO LONGER
REMEMBERS...

THE PAIN RIPS—
AND FOR A BLACK,
STAGGERING MOMENT,
HE FEARS HE IS
LOSING HIS MIND.

NO...

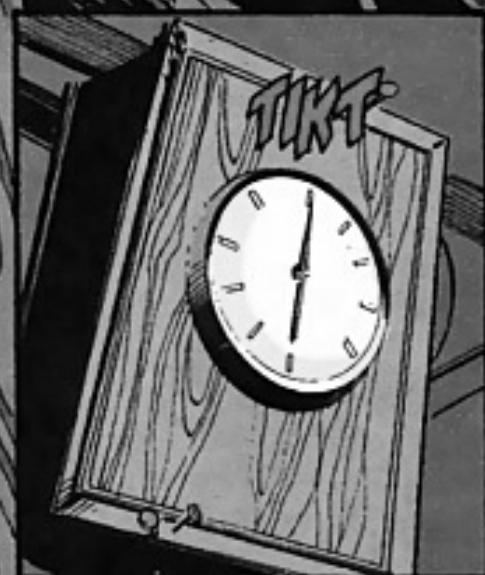
OR HAS ALREADY
LOST IT.

...THE PAIN OF THE
SYSTEM, AND ALL
ITS DREAD DARK
SECRETS PLANTED
DEEPLY IN HIS MIND.

NO...

THEN HE
SCREAMS.

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO



RATCH

KTANK







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Dear Denny and Jordan,

As expected, this Batman made quick meat of Mekros. Nevertheless, BATMAN #502 was still a very enjoyable read. If nothing else, Mekros proved to Azrael that not every villain can be beaten by brute force alone. Mekros made this Batman plan, think, and—gasp—do a little detective work before he kicked his head in. Speaking of kicking, I found page 12, panel 4, to be another low for this Batman. Bruce Wayne would never have been so savage, which I still think will be the final downfall of the Azrael/Batman.

Secondly, I really like what you are doing with Commissioner Gordon and Mayor Krol. I've never liked Krol, but it is just like him to go with whoever or whatever will get him votes. I hate his suggestion that Gordon find ways to copy this Batman's methods. An army of dangerous vigilantes is not what Gotham City needs.

In closing, a word or two about Robin. Now that Robin has his own title, I see no reason for him to make even guest appearances in either BATMAN or DETECTIVE COMICS. I think that Robin appearances should be kept to a bare minimum.

Kevin Hall
Sandston, VA

ROBIN delivers stories of a very different tone than those in BATMAN and TEC co-starring Robin—in one type of story Robin is an apprentice to a master, and in the other he applies what he has learned to his solo adventures. These are complementary halves of a whole, and there will always be room for both.



Dear Jordan,

I think the real joy of a letters column in a comic is getting to look at opinions and ideas of fellow letterhackers. Occasionally, someone will write a letter that strikes a chord with the readers and causes them to see an issue in a completely different light or offer an insight that might have been missed before. BATMAN #502 contained such a letter for me, in the form of Robert Silva's criticism of today's Batman.

While I support the "Dark Knight" vision of Batman and would not want to see the lighthearted approach he espoused put into effect, his letter did get me thinking about what could be done to improve the Batman books even more. These are already among the best books on the comics rack today, but you can never stop improving.

BATMAN #502 held a clue in its storyline. Batman lacks a great degree of ongoing subplots operating in the background in addition to the regular storyline. Aside from Gordon's heart attack, marriage, and Batman's agony over Jason Todd's death, not much has happened in the background since 1989. Creating a few more of these subplots with lasting repercussions would be the only suggestion for improvement I'd make. The growing rift between Mayor Krol and Commissioner Gordon, as well as Gordon's rising frustrations with his job as seen in this and the last couple of issues, are the type of subplots I'm talking about.

Just add one or two more to run concurrently with this one and you'll have the brilliant storytelling I'm talking about.

Aside from this request, I like the way things are developing. Jean Paul is slowly sinking into the violence that will be his undoing, and Sarah's thoughts on there being many people in the Batman costume over the years were extremely logical. Keep up the good work.

James Evans
Ithaca, NY

Speaking of the scene focusing on Gordon and Essen's living room discussion, wasn't Mike Manley's art on that page breathtaking? To my mind, he really brought Jim and Sarah alive in a way we have never previously investigated—their lives outside of the Gotham City Police Department. The way Mike portrayed them, as a real husband and wife, with all their responsibilities, insecurities and stresses evident in their postures and expressions, spoke volumes about their relationship together. (I want to buy that page, Mike!)



Dear Mr. Gorfinkel,

It's stories like "Phoenix in Chaos" in BATMAN #502 that give action yarns a good name. Doug Moench must use special gloves to pull all that suspense out of his word processor. And what a fight scene! Plausible, exciting, and when the smoke cleared, the bad guy came out on top even if he had to clobber the worse bad guy to do it.

Mike Manley's artistic skill fit the Batman comic like a super-hero costume. Surely he is creating a body of work to be remembered in its own right.

Steve Perram
Bellingham, WA



Dear Mr. Gorfinkel,

I must tell you that I enjoyed BATMAN #502. The Mekros character was a brilliant idea. He is worthy of being a Batman foe. The whole Mekros storyline was well written and excellently drawn. Good job, Doug Moench and Mike Manley! But I guess you guys already know that.

I wanted to comment not only on the superb writing and artistry, but also on one aspect of the cover. I've been noticing that the new Batman has smaller ears on his costume, but on the cover of BATMAN #502 his ears are larger. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining at all. In fact, I prefer the larger ears to the smaller ears. The larger ears give the costume a darker and more menacing look which is the new Batman's style. I think the larger ears have a more intimidating look. As a diehard Bat-fan since 1989, I wish to suggest that the new Batman costume have larger ears. I know I'm one man, but maybe other people feel the way I do. We could start a larger-ears-for-the-new-Batman club.

One more thing: As much as I loved Bruce Wayne's Batman, I think Jean Paul Valley's Batman will make for some interesting storylines. And anybody who thinks

that Jean Paul's portrayal of Batman is scarring the original Batman's record, they have only to look at the new costume and say, "He's not the Original Batman."

Nathan G. Ezzo
Pennsville, NJ

I am the charter member of the big-ears fan club, but I firmly believe that you have to earn the long ears, something Paul Valley has not done yet. Maybe over time...

MTGGLF,
Gorf

—Has Knight fever.

THE REST OF THIS MONTH:

IN ONE WEEK Commissioner Gordon finally confronts Batman about his new attitude. It's a shattering emotional roller-coaster in **SHADOW OF THE BAT #28** by Alan Grant, Bret Blevins and Bob Smith.

IN TWO WEEKS Batman concludes his showdown with Gunhawk in an upgraded costume! It's Bat-suit version III, in **DETECTIVE COMICS #675** by Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan and Scott Hanna and featuring a stunning Kelley Jones & John Beatty cover.

ALSO IN TWO WEEKS Bruce Wayne concludes his search for Shondra Kinsolving and finds himself. It's the healing arts in **LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #61** by Dennis O'Neil and Eduardo Barreto.

IN THREE WEEKS Robin thinks everything is finally gonna be okay because Bruce Wayne is back. It's a very unexpected turn of events in **ROBIN #7**, the crossover and conclusion of "Knightquest: The Search & The Crusade" by Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett and Raymond Kryssing.

ALSO IN THREE WEEKS Catwoman battles her way toward the medical device that can cure her friend, only to discover an insidious plot to create cyborgs in Gotham. It's mechanical machismo in **CATWOMAN #11** by Jo Duffy, Jim Balent and Ande Parks.

AND IN ONE MONTH we deliver two parts of the final storyline in the "Knight trilogy"—"KnightsEnd." First, in a double-sized **BATMAN #509**, Robin is assigned to tail Batman while Bruce Wayne meets martial arts master Lady Shiva to make a deal that will either save him or kill him. It's "KnightsEnd" Part One by Doug Moench, Mike Manley and Dick "BATMAN #497" Giordano. Then, in a double-sized **SHADOW OF THE BAT #29**, Bruce battles deadly ninjas at an abandoned logging mill while Nightwing returns to Gotham City to aid Robin. It's "KnightsEnd" Part Two by Alan Grant, Bret Blevins and Bob Smith. Folks, it does not get any better than this!

COVER by Jones, with Le Rose and (it's good to be Curtis) King.

Scanned By
GCPD Guy







Driven mad by the light of the scanner, these men
have been committed - to excellence

JANUSREDWAY

GCPD-Guy

DogwtSixEyes

THE INSOMNIACS